

TODAY'S SUPERVISOR



Summer 2008

The journal for members of the Association of California State Supervisors

**ACSS member
John Foster
finds history
under water**



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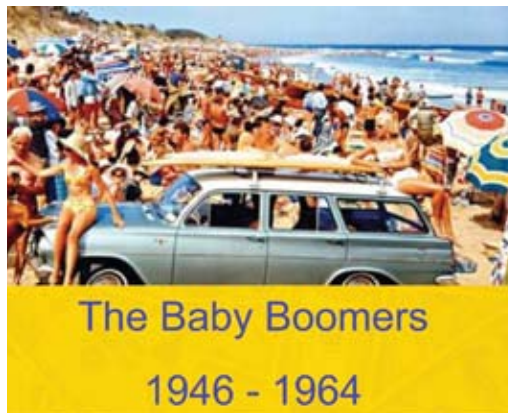
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Where are the Baby Boomers now? Retiring. In five years, the state could lose 75 percent of its top management to retirement. DPA's Dave Gilb talks about some changes we can expect, beginning on [page 9](#).

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Photo: Charles Beeker, Indiana University

On the cover

All in a day's work: State Archaeologist and ACSS member John Foster examines shipwrecks and other artifacts buried under California's waters. Read about his unusual job on [page 12](#).

A new day

Welcome to your new "Today's Supervisor." Let us know how we can serve you. **From Linda Holderness**

After more than a year, ACSS is publishing "Today's Supervisor" magazine again. For the near future, you can expect a new issue each quarter.

Our primary goal, as it has always been, is to provide you with the information you want and need as a state manager or supervisor. We will keep you informed of our efforts on your behalf with the Legislature and the governor, of state issues that concern you and of events you might benefit from attending or knowing about.

We are going down a few new roads, too, spotlighting members and adding features that can make doing your job easier or even more fun.

This month, we have something of everything.

Even if you're not a math person, you'll grasp the numbers DPA Director Dave Gilb presented at the April board meeting: Nearly half of the state's supervisory staff could retire in the next five years. Filling those positions with qualified workers will mean changing the way the state recruits and hires. We think you'll find Dave's vision as compelling as we did. See the story on page 9.

Have you heard a rumor that state jobs are boring? Meet John Foster. This ACSS member is not only California's state archaeologist – he's also the state's sole *underwater* archaeologist. And if you're

wondering, as I was, why the state employs an archaeologist who dives, you'll be intrigued by his story, on page 12.


I'm not sure I'd ever met a real hero until I interviewed DMV supervisor Nate Williams. Nate risked his life last year to save a young man from a burning car. The medal he received from Gov. Schwarzenegger was well-deserved. Nate's story, on page 7, will warm your heart.

Labor Relations Rep Nellie Lynn may not be quite a hero, but many of her clients could think of her as a savior. After 19 years with CSEA and ACSS, Nellie is still committed to helping members resolve their concerns. Meet her on page 18.

Also not to be missed: attorney Rocco Paternoster's discussion of how to deal with medicinal marijuana in your workplace and a column of surprisingly useful remedies for making your work life more satisfying.

But don't you do all the reading. We want to read, too – your letters and emails telling us what you think and what you'd like to see in future issues.

Share with us your ideas. Introduce us to people we should spotlight. Let us know how we can improve.

We're your magazine. 



Sunken treasures

There are no 'pieces of eight' at the bottom of the Sacramento River — or *are there?* ACSS member John Foster hunts the riches that lie buried in California's waters

Oh, the tales the Sacramento River could tell. Native Americans thrived on it, gold seekers chased their dreams across it.

Today's river seems ordinary by comparison.

But still waters run deep.

Hidden beneath this river, and other California waters, are troves of historic treasures. State Archaeologist and ACSS member John Foster finds these artifacts and coaxes out their history. He unearths not the bones of animals but the bones of our culture and helps us understand them.

Foster, a supervisor for cultural resource programs, has worked for California State Parks since 1975. He knew as a boy that he would be an archaeologist, but he didn't expect his work would make him a diver.

Someone has to do it. The state owns the land under all of California's rivers and streams and the coastline out to three miles. The underwater parks program be-

gan in 1968, but there was no underwater archaeologist until the state sent Foster for training in 1979. He still is the state's only underwater archaeologist.

"It's been a great career," he says. "I love my job, love my department. I feel lucky to have found the perfect job for me."

The state operates 19 underwater parks with facilities and exhibits for both divers and non-divers. They include Emerald Bay, Crystal Cove, Fort Ross, Mono Lake, Point Lobos.



Photos: On vacations, State Archaeologist John Foster leads students on dives for artifacts in Key West and the Caribbean, where he is searching for one of Captain Kidd's pirate ships. At right, Foster checks out sites on the Sacramento River in May. No Gold Rush ships are visible, but this World War I hull lies near Old Sacramento.



On joining ACSS

John Foster joined ACSS the day he became a supervisor: "I think it's important to have an organization that represents you and looks out for your interests as an employee. ACSS has a valuable role to play in finding ways to make government work as efficiently as it can and for the benefit of the most people."

The parks are popular with divers and underwater photographers for their marine resources, but many also hide remnants of history, such as hulls of sunken ships and ancient native California settlements. Finding, protecting and interpreting these sites is part of Foster's job.

On a warm day in May, Foster took a spin in his State Parks boat to check out sites along the Sacramento riverfront. His finds there have yielded information about the maritime history of the Gold Rush and of local native cultures thousands of years ago.

At least four Gold Rush-era vessels lie buried near Sacramento. Most gold seekers arrived by ship. Usually, it was a one-way journey. The passengers disembarked, salvaged everything they could, including rigging and lumber, and headed for the hills. For this reason, few day-to-day items, such as utensils and toys, are found.

In the 1850s, there were as many as 100 sailing ships tied up on the Sacramento waterfront. One was the city jail until it sank in 1859.

One of Foster's goals is to bring up a piece of a Gold Rush hull, preserve it and put it on display to add to the public's awareness of the maritime history of the Gold Rush. The project will be a challenge with only 6 inches of visibility under water.

An Olmsted award

In May, John Foster received State Parks' Olmsted award for leadership and vision. He was honored, out of 5,000 nominees, for his lifetime commitment to State Parks. for helping protect and preserve the state's resources and for bringing the excitement of discovery to the public. As California's only underwater archaeologist, he has brought a unique dimension to the archaeology profession. The award was especially meaningful, Foster said, because it came from his peers.

Another is to develop an underwater museum trail highlighting coastal shipwrecks. This trail would allow divers and snorkelers to touch California history and would interpret for nondivers the spots where the maritime events occurred.

The Gold Rush ships may seem old at 150 years, but the native settlements Foster has discovered date back 8,000 to 9,000 years. Buried by sediments over the millennia, the sites, under Foster's direction, are now revealing the state's earliest history.

The abundance of California's food resources – including the salmon in the Sacramento River – enabled the native peoples to live in settled villages without agriculture. As a result, the cultures were remarkably diverse – with more than 100 languages, traditions and histories.

"No place else in North America had that diversity," Foster says.

These early people didn't farm, but they managed and preserved their natural resources so effectively that we are now able to have "this huge, wonderful state park system here," Foster says.

"A healthy park system is not a luxury," he says. "It is crucial to a society to have places where people can connect with nature and their own history. By interpreting your past, you learn what your roots are."

Even if you're finding them under water. 